Private & Personal

Poonch Baradari

Jammu

22. 8. 27.

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My dear Esteemed Maharaja Sahib,

The confidence inspired in me by the friendly relations that existed between my late adoptive father, Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh Sahib of Kashmir and Your Highness, as also by Your Highness' kindliness of feelings towards myself, has urged me to address Your Highness a letter like this. What I would like to convey to Your Highness, without entering into a long narrative of grievances, is, that my status in Kashmir State, as proposed by His late Highness, was to be that of the Second son of his House.

As ill-luck would have it, His present Highness, not liking that I should enjoy that position in the Jammu Royal House, negatived my adoption on his accession to the Gaddi by describing me in a Patta or Sanad, as the Second son, not of His late Highness but of the late Raja Baldev Singhji of Poonch, my natural father. This was the greatest humiliation that could be inflicted on me. How could I who was hardly a couple of years old when I was adopted by His late Highness and brought up by him as his real son, reconcile myself to the severance of my relationship with his House? not only was I educated

by His late Highness with all the fatherly care and affection but my marriage and other religious ceremonies, such as Sacred Thread Ceremony and Mundan Sanskar etc. also had had their celebration at his hands - and at State expenses. In fact my transplantation from my natural family into the family of His late Highness was complete in every respect. Your Highness may now picture to yourself, how deeply wounded must my feelings be at the knowledge of my exclusion from the family of my adoption with whom,by virtue of association of long years,my life and being were identified and into which my absorption was so complete that till the lamented demise of His late Highness,none of his subjects or Brotherhood had ever imagined ~~that such a thing~~ as my reversion to my natural family, so insulting and humiliating to the memory of His late Highness and in itself,would ever come to pass. Would it not be sacrilegious on my part if I should allow myself not to be styled as the adopted son of His late Highness?

Moreover, as enjoined by the Dharmashastras,I had the privilege and honour of officiating at the obsiquies and other funeral rites of His late Highness,my revered father. Moved by feelings prompted by my relationship with His late Highness and his now-Dowager Maharani,my esteemed mother,as described above,I declined to accept the maintenance allowance of Rs125000/- a year, which His present Highness was pleased to confer on me in the Patta referred to above, as I was required to accept it as the Second son of the late Raja Baldev Singhji.

Before doing so, I gave my serious consideration to the matter and inspite of that I could not justify my acceptance of His Highness' gift of the allowance, on the plea that in virtue of the cancellation of my adoption [redacted] and the implied rever-

reversion to my natural family therefrom, it could be interpreted to mean nothing else but a compensation for performing the obsequies of His late Highness which function it was my duty to perform without looking for a reward. It is not only I who have arrived at that inferance, but the popular interpretation too, endorses the view held by me.

I prayed to His Highness that if he desired me to accept the allowance he should graciously be pleased to let me not be excluded from the membership of His ~~late Highness~~' House, i.e.I should be regarded as the second son of His late Highness, as such also were his esteemed wishes. His Highness took offence at this. Turned I had already been from the Palaces and now as the mark of further displeasure, cancelled the forementioned Patta i.e., forefeited the allowance and the titles he had offered to me.

I do not know how to appease His Highness whose only wish is that I should accept the gift in the manner in which it was offered to me, that is, as the second son of the late Raja Baldev Singhji of Poonch, while my conscience forbids me to accept anything that might mean a compensation for officiating at the obsequies of His late Highness with whom my relationship as father and son had been negatived.

Under these unpleasant circumstances that have arisen and led to the present estrangment, I take the liberty and would beg to be pardoned for doing so, of counting upon Your Highness' sympathy and support. I would deem myself exceptionally fortunate if through Your Highness' valuable influence, directly or indirectly, I can mend

my present situation.

I have put in a representation to His Highness to reconsider my case, submitting that if he objected to my being described as the second son of His late Highness, I would be pleased if I could be described as his adopted son, subject to any conditions that with justice and equity, he should think, should govern my adoption. It is more than eight months since then and I am anxiously waiting for the reply.

The retired Dewan of ~~Your Highness~~' State, Sir Albion R. Bannerji has been appointed as the Senior Minister of Kashmir and has also the charge of the disposal of the affairs of the Royal family. As such,he should now be the chief councellor and adviser of His Highness. I think, he would be able to end this unhappy state of affairs regarding myself, should he care to do so. If Your Highness be pleased to write to him to do all he can for me to establish my position as the second son of the late Maharaja of Kashmir, or failing that, onlyto get me described and recognised as the adopted son of His late Highness in a new Patta,subject to suitable conditions, I shall ever feel greatly indebted to Your Highness.

I am full of confidence, Your Highness' writing to Sir Albion will have great weight. As a friend of my late lamented adoptive father I have a right to look upon Your Highness to lend me a helping hand in my adversity. My career has already been wrecked and I hope sincerely Your Highness will not allow me to continue in this sad plight for long. A small effort on the part of Your Highness will help me to regain my rightful position.

I had long been thinking of writing to Your Highness but the hope that matters might mend of themselves, did not let me do so. Expecting help from no other quarters now, I could not help giving this trouble to Your Highness and hope confidently Your Highness will be pleased to excuse me for all this. Last of all, I would pray Your Highness to kindly treat this letter as personal and private, and in writing to Sir Albion, Your Highness would be pleased to do so as if it were out of Your Highness' own accord, without alluding to this letter. If it be not going too far I may be excused to add that Sir Albion also should make no hint that he received any correspondence from Your Highness regarding my affairs.

Hope this will find Your highness
in the enjoyment of excellent health.
With best respects
Your highness most obediently
Jagat Dev Singh